

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8978

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 3364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: REPORT OF COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORT FOR OPPOSITION CONGRESSMEN
BRING UNEASY REACTION

SUMMARY: THE APPARENTLY DELIBERATE LEAK TO THE PRESS ON APRIL 24 OF AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS BY A COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER THAT 23 MDB CONGRESSMEN RECEIVED ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM THE PARTY CLARIFIED RUMORS THAT HAD CIRCULATED TO THAT EFFECT AND STIRRED UNCERTAIN, UNEASY REACTION. WHILE THE MDB SOUGHT IN VARIOUS WAYS TO DEFEND ITSELF, THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION WAS HOW THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REACT TO THIS INSTANCE OF FURTHER PRESSURE ON THE PART OF SECURITY FORCES. EARLY FEARS THAT IA-5 WOULD BE USED TO CASSATE THOSE IMPLICATED HAVE EASED, BUT A BIG QUESTION MARK CONTINUES TO HANG OVER THE FATE OF DECOMPRESSION. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING WEEKS OF RUMORS REGARDING SOME KIND OF LINK BETWEEN THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCB) AND SOME CONGRESSMEN OF THE OPPOSITON MDB, THE PRESS APRIL 25 PUBLISHED A REPORT ON THE PCB SENT TO A MILITARY COURT BY DEOPS (PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY DEPT. OF FEDERAL POLICE) IN SAO PAULO, ACCORDING TO WHICH AT LEAST ONE PCB MEMBER NAMED 23 MDB CONGRESSMEN AS HAVING RECEIVED ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM THE PCB IN THE NOVEMBER 1974 ELECTIONS.

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2. THE INFORMANT WAS FORMER FEDERAL DEPUTY MARCO ANTONIO TAVARES

COELHO, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY FIGURED IN HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CHARGES, WHICH WERE FOLLOWED BY EVEN MORE PUBLICIZED DENIALS, THAT HE HAD BEEN MISTREATED DURING HIS DETENTION (BRASILIA 1566). ACCORDING TO THE PUBLISHED REPORT, COELHO LISTED THE FOLLOWING AS HAVING RECEIVED PCB SUPPORT (COMMENT: THE NATURE OF THE SUPPORT IS NOT DESCRIBED, BUT GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE SUGGESTS THAT IT IS BEING TAKEN TO MEAN PCB DIRECTIVES TO ITS MEMBERS TO VOTE FOR THE POLITICIANS IN QUESTION. END COMMENT):

A. SAO PAULO: FOR THE FEDERAL CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, MARCELLO GATTO, GUACU PETERI, FREDERICO BRANDAO; FOR THE STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, ALBERTO COLDMANN AND NELSON FABIANO (THE REPORT ALSO CITED ANOTHER PCB SOURCE AS NAMING GOLDMANN AND AYRTON SOARES);

B. GUANABARA: SENATE, DANTON JOBIM; CHAMBER, LYSANEAS MACIEL AND JORGE MOURA; ASSEMBLY, EDSON KHAIR AND DELIO SANTOS;

C. MINAS GERAIS: SENATE, ITAMAR FRANCO; CHAMBER, MARCOS TITO;

D. PERNAMBUCO: SENATE, MARCOS FREIRE; CHAMBER, FERNANDO LIRA, JARBAS VASCONCELLOS, SERGIO MURILO; ASSEMBLY, MARCOS CUNHA;

E. RIO DE JANEIRO STATE: SENATE, ROBERTO SATURNINO BRAGA; CHAMBER, WELLINGTON MOREIRA FRANCO; ASSEMBLY, ALVES DE BRITO;

F. RIO GRANDE DO SUL: SENATE, PAULO BROSSARD; CHAMBER, PINHEIRO MACHADO.
THE REPORT SAYS THERE WAS ALSO PCB SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES IN OTHER STATES, BUT THEIR IDENTITIES ARE NOT KNOWN.

3. EVEN BEFORE THE REPORT WAS PUBLISHED, RECURRING RUMORS ALONG SUCH LINES HAD PROVOKED SIGNS OF NERVOUSNESS AMONG MDB FIGURES, WHO AT FIRST APPEARED UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW TO REACT. THE INITIAL SUGGESTION THAT THE RUMORS SHOULD NOT BE DIGNIFIED BY A RESPONSE SOON GAVE WAY TO MORE DIRECT SELF-DEFENSE: SINCE THE PCB IS ILLEGAL AND CAN PRESENT NO CANDIDATES OF ITS OWN, IT WAS POINTED OUT, AND CAN VOTE ONLY FOR EITHER THE GOVERNMENT PARTY OR THE OPPOSITION, IT WILL NATURALLY INCLINE TOWARD THE
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LATTER; ONCE A VOTE IS CAST, WENT ANOTHER POINT, IT CANNOT BE TRACED, AND THUS A CANDIDATE HAS NO WAY OF REFUSING TO ACCEPT VOTES FROM AN ILLEGAL SOURCE (SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT, IT HAS BEEN ADDED THAT JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO MADE THAT SAME POINT IN AN EARLIER POLITICAL ERA); IT HAS ALSO BEEN STATED, ALTHOUGH LESS PROMINENTLY, THAT THE PCB MIGHT DELIVERAELY HAVE SOUGHT SUCH MEANS TO INJURE POLITICIANS IT KNEW TO BE HOSTILE TO ITS CAUSE. MORE RECENTLY, THE REACTION FROM WITHIN THE MDB

HAS BEEN TO CRY "SMEAR": SENATORS FRANCO MONTORO AND PAULO BROSSARD HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY PROMINENT--AND FORTHRIGHT"" IN DENOUCING THE LEAKING OF THE REPORT AS A CRUDE EFFORT BY EASILY IDENTIFIED ELEMENTS TO TRY TO INTIMIDATE THE MDB AND TAR IT WITH THE COMMUNIST BRUSH. OTHERS HAVE CALLED FOR AN OFFICIAL, FORMAL PARTY REACTION, BUT SO FAR, AT LEAST, NONE HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING EXCEPT PARTY PRESIDENT ULYSSES GUIMARAES' CONTENTION THAT THE PARTY'S EARLIER NOTE, WHICH DENOUCED THE RUMORS AS "A MANEUVER OF SOME SECTORS LOOKING TOWARD THE DEMORALIZATION OF THE PARTY AND TO IMPLANT CONFUSION IN PUBLIC OPINION", IS ALL THE MATTER DESERVES.

4. COMMENT: WHILE THE MODERATE MDB LEADERSHIP WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE IS SOME FIRE BEHIND THE SMOKE, IT SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH-PRINCIPLED STAND. FOR ITS PART, ARENA HAS BEEN LYING LOW ON THE MATTER, ALTHOUGH PROMINENT SENATOR JARBAS PASSARINHO HAS NOTED PUBLICLY THE DIFFICULTY OF BELIEVING THE PVB IS RESPONSIBLE FOR "THE MASSIVE VOTE OF SOME CANDIDATES". THE REALLY STICKY WICKET FALLS TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHAT ACTION IT WILL TAKE IN THE FACE OF THE REVELATIONS.

5. THE LEAKING OF THE REPORT OF COURSE REPRESENTS FURTHER PRESSURE BY SECURITY FORCES ON THE MDB AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, ON THE GOVERNMENT. COMMENT SO FAR HAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT THE MATTER CANNOT SIMPLY STOP HERE, BUT WILL REQUIRE CLARIFICATION AND RESOLUTION. ONE THEORY IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL SIMPLY LET THE ORDINARY INVESTIGATION RUN ITS COURSE, WITH THE CONSEQUENT SWORD-OF-DAMOCLES EFFECT SERVING IN THE MEANTIME TO KEEP ARDENT OPPOSITIONISTS IN LINE. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY RECEIVING SOME MENTION IS THAT OF A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SET UP BY CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. EARLY FEARS REGARDING THE MOST DRASTIC POSSIBILITY--THE USE OF IA-5 TO CASSATE THE IMPLICATED POLITICIANS--APPEAR TO HAVE EASED, FOLLOWING CHAMBER MAJORITY LEADER JOSE BONFIFACIO'S PUBLIC DISMISSAL OF THE IDEA AS "ABSURD", AND AS THE IDEA HAS GOWN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT GO SO FAR IN THE ABSENCE OF AT LEAST SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE NAMED POLITICIANS WERE MORE THAN UNWITTING, PASSIVE RECIPIENTS OF THE PCB'S NUMERICALLY INSIGNIFICANT VOTE.

6. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, THE MATTER ARISES AT A TIME WHEN A LARGE QUESTION MARK CONTINUES TO HOVER OVER THE FATE OF DECOMPRESSION (SEE BRASILIA 2322), AND THE MANNER OF ITS RESOLUTION WILL BE SEEN AS AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF THE LIKELY DIRECTION OF FUTURE POLITICAL EVENTS. END COMMENT
CRIMMINS

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